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A study of the impact on the Hinds County School system by a possible removal of one or two geographical areas

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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF
COUNTY SCHOOL REORGANIZATION
-REMOVAL OF ONE OR TWO GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

The Mississippi Collection

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A STUDY OF THE IMPACT ON THE HINDS
COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM BY A POSSIBLE
REMOVAL OF ONE OR TWO GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

PURPOSE OF STUDY

HISTORY OF THE HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL
SYSTEM

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE PROPOSAL TO
CREATE TWO DISTRICTS WITHIN THE HINDS
COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
By
Fred W. Young, President
Southwide Educational Enterprises, Inc.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE EFFECT
OF THE ANNEXATION OF THE CITY OF JACKSON
ON A PORTION OF THE HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
PURPOSE OF SURVEY	1
HISTORY OF THE HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM	4
OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE PROPOSAL TO CREATE THE CLINTON MUNICIPAL SEPARATE SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH ADJACENT TERRITORY COTERMINOUS WITH THE FIFTH HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ZONE.	9
SOME OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE EFFECT OF THE ANNEXATION BY THE CITY OF JACKSON OF A PORTION OF THE FOREST HILL ATTENDANCE ZONE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	16
HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM WITH THE FIFTH ATTENDANCE ZONE BECOMING A SEPARATE DISTRICT AND A PORTION OF FOREST HILL ZONE ANNEXED TO THE CITY OF JACKSON	21

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF SURVEY

As a result of the recommendations made by the officials of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the order of the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on November 7, 1969, the Hinds County School System was divided into seven high school attendance zones. The Hinds County School Board is now operating under this order of November 7, 1969, with some modification to be effective in 1970-71.

The Hinds County School Board is responsible for providing the public school program for all of Hinds County exclusive of that area served by the Jackson Municipal Separate School District. As of January 30, 1970, the pupil population enrolled in the county system was as follows:

Negro	7,024	53.88	percent
White	<u>6,012</u>	<u>46.12</u>	percent
	13,036	100.00	percent

There is, at the present time, a taxable base of \$46,364,577 used to provide local taxes at the rate of 28 mills, which is the maximum permitted by law.

The bonded indebtedness of the Hinds County Board of Education as of the beginning of the 1969-70 fiscal year was \$4,357,000. The average debt service per year

on this obligation is \$413,500, the last bonds to be retired in 1982-83. The City of Jackson, because of the previous annexation of a portion of the Hinds County School District, is sharing in this debt service through the year 1974-75, and will during this period, provide a total of \$385,198 toward this obligation. This present indebtedness represents 9.4 percent of the assessed valuation included in the Hinds County School System, 15 percent being the legal maximum for which the system may have as an outstanding indebtedness.

During the past year, there have developed two proposals affecting the Hinds County School System. The implementation of one, or both, of these proposals would have considerable bearing on the remainder of the system. These two proposals are:

1. That there be created a municipal separate school district for the City of Clinton, and all that territory now located in high school attendance zone five.
2. That the City of Jackson extend its corporate limits into a portion of high school attendance zone four. This would automatically annex into the Jackson Municipal Separate School System many pupils and certain school facilities located in the areas proposed for annexation.

In this study, these two proposals will be treated first separately, and then in combination, to show their effect on the existing and proposed districts.

The survey staff has been requested to examine these two proposals and to make observations relative to their probable effects. Recommendations and conclusions will not be included, in order that all the interested parties can examine the facts and reach conclusions in an understanding manner. It has been the purpose of the staff to act as a fact finding body, and in this study it has attempted to present every fact, and facet of information bearing upon the proposals in order that those persons in positions to make decisions on the two proposals can draw the best possible conclusions for action on the two matters.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Mississippi Legislature on February 12, 1821, passed an Act stating that "All that tract of land added to the United States by The Choctaw Nation of Indians on the 18th day of October, 1820, and bound as above stated, shall be and is hereby directed and established into a new County, which shall be called and known by the name of 'Hinds' in honor of General Thomas Hinds, one of the heroes in Jackson's Coast Campaign against the British in 1813-15."

Counties later created from the original area of Hinds County are Yazoo, Copiah, and Rankin. In addition, a small portion of Madison County, which was carved mainly from Yazoo County, was taken from Hinds County. The large counties mentioned above, created from the original territory of Hinds, in turn were divided into numerous other counties.

The County of Hinds as it exists today embraces a territory of 847 square miles, and is irregular in shape. It is bound on the north by Yazoo and Madison Counties, on the east by Madison and Rankin Counties, on the south by Copiah, and on the west by Claiborne and Warren Counties.

In the ensuing years after its creation, numerous schools were set up for the education of the children of Hinds County. For instance, it is known that by 1890 there were

63 white schools in the County.

Superintendent C. S. North of Hinds County in his 1894-95 annual report to the State Superintendent of Education stated, "Secondary Education - we have four separate school districts: Bolton, Edwards, Jackson and Terry. Raymond, Utica and Learned have each a high school doing graded work."

A bill providing for the consolidation of schools was introduced at the 1910 Session of the Legislature. It was passed with little opposition, and was approved by the Governor on March 9, 1910. In that year, Hinds County had seventy-five schools for white children, practically all of them one and two teacher schools. However, consolidation did not get underway in Hinds County until 1914, Byron and Forest Hill being the first consolidated schools to be created in the County. Both of these districts were created at the same meeting of the school board which was held on July 27, 1914. In the years that immediately succeeded, consolidation progressed rapidly, so that by 1920 the number of schools in the County had decreased from 75 to 30. This consolidation continued in Hinds County until 1932, when the last one and two teacher schools were consolidated with other districts. Carmichael School, located six miles southeast of Utica, was the last one teacher school in the County.

On January 13, 1932, the following consolidated

school districts were abolished; namely, Pochontas, Raymond, Tinnin, Terry, Newman, Utica, Byram, Clinton, Wise, Brownsville, Forest Hill, Learned, Lebanon, Liberty Grove, and Carmichael. In lieu thereof, the Hinds County Special Consolidated School District was created and was composed of all the territory in Hinds County, except that within the corporate limits of the City of Jackson and within the Carter Orphanage Public School District. Even though the Hinds County Special Consolidated School District was created, each of the local districts were referred to as Specified Areas, and were permitted to vote on and issue bonds for school buildings, and to levy taxes for operational purposes.

On June 8, 1939, the Tinnin School District and the Pochontas School District were transferred to, or merged with, the Clinton District.

On January 21, 1948, the entire Liberty Grove Specified Area was added to the Jackson Municipal School District. Three school buildings were located in this annexation; namely, Liberty Grove, now known as Watkins Elementary School; Broadmeadow, now known as Bradley Elementary School; and Broadmoor, now known as Boyd Elementary School. In 1949, the City of Jackson extended its limits and annexed approximately 25% of the Byram territory; 20.6% of the Clinton territory; and 50.25% of the Forest Hill territory.

On July 14, 1950, the Hinds County Board of Education

abolished the 97 Negro common school districts in Hinds County and created the Hinds County Negro County-Unit School District of Hinds County. At this time a one mill tax levy was placed on the entire Hinds County Special Consolidated School District for the sole purpose of building Negro school buildings.

The last bond issues voted by Specified Areas was in 1954 when the Clinton Specified Area voted \$375,000 in bonds for a classroom addition, and to acquire land at the present site in Clinton for the construction of Clinton Boulevard Elementary School, and an amount to partially aid in the construction of Sumner Hill School for Negroes. Forest Hill voted \$440,000 in bonds to build additions at Forest Hill, to construct Van Winkle Elementary School, grades 1-6 for whites, and to pay part of the cost of West Side Elementary-Junior High School for Negroes.

At the time of reorganization in 1956, there existed eight specified areas, or school districts, for white students in the Hinds County School District. They were as follows: Bolton, Byram, Clinton, Edwards, Forest Hill, Raymond, Terry, and Utica. There were 31 Attendance Centers for Negroes in the County-Unit Negro School District.

In 1959 the City of Jackson again extended its city limits and annexed a considerable amount of the Hinds County School District. This annexation took 31.93%

of the assessed valuation and two school buildings, namely; Clinton Boulevard Elementary School, now known as Raines Elementary School; and Oak Forest Elementary School, now known as Marshall Elementary School. In each annexation, the Jackson Municipal Separate School District assumed that proportionate share of the bonded indebtedness of the County School District as the amount of assessed valuation taken bears to the total assessed valuation of the County School District prior to annexation.

At present, there are twenty-four attendance centers in the Hinds County School District; four of these being located in what is considered the high school zone of the Clinton Attendance area. These four schools are, Clinton High School, Clinton Elementary Jr. High School, Clinton Park Elementary School, and Northside Elementary School.

Forest Hill High School Attendance area high school zone four is composed of six schools. These schools are: Forest Hill Junior-Senior High School, Oak Forest Elementary School, the recently completed Woodville Heights Elementary School, Van Winkle Elementary School, West Side Elementary and Junior High School, and the newly constructed Timberlawn Elementary School. The first three are located in the area proposed for annexation by the City of Jackson.

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE PROPOSAL TO CREATE THE CLINTON MUNICIPAL SEPARATE SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH ADJACENT TERRITORY COTERMINOUS WITH THE FIFTH HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ZONE

PUPIL PERSONNEL

There are presently in use three school centers located in the corporate limits of Clinton. A new school located just outside the city limits is now under construction. These schools and the pupil enrollments in each are:

<u>School Center</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
Clinton Park	791
Clinton Junior High and Elementary	919
Clinton High School	687
Northside (New School)	-
Sub-total	<u>2,397</u>
Resident Students to be Transferred	<u>127*</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>2,524</u></u>

* In addition to the 2,397 pupils now enrolled, there are 23 pupils residing in this zone now attending school at Forest Hill, and 104 attending school at Van Winkle.

The 2,524 pupils residing in the proposed separate district represents 19.36 percent of the pupil enrollment of the Hinds County School System. Of the 2,524 pupils, 1,517 reside within the corporate limits of Clinton. It is assumed that the other 1,007 pupils reside within the proposed district boundaries, but outside the city limits.

The pupil population is divided by race as follows:

White	2,110	83.60	percent
Negro	<u>414</u>	<u>16.40</u>	percent
TOTAL	<u>2,524</u>	<u>100.00</u>	percent

FISCAL DATA

The current assessed valuation of taxable properties in the fifth high school attendance zone is \$8,040,700, of which \$6,140,775 is located within the city limits of Clinton. The \$8,040,700 represents 17.34 percent of the total assessed valuation of the Hinds County School System. The assessed valuation within the fifth zone would provide a tax base of \$3,186 for each of the 2,524 pupils. The \$3,186 is \$370 less than the \$3,556 per pupil in the county school system for 1969-70.

The proposed district would have to assume its pro-rata share of the existing indebtedness of the Hinds County Board of Education, and make provisions for this share for the remaining life of such obligations. The average annual debt service for the county is \$413,500. The proposed district's share would be 17.34 percent or approximately \$71,700 per year.

From data provided to the survey staff, it appears that the Hinds County Board of Education has allocated to the schools in Clinton a total of \$544,937 from the county's earned Education Finance Commission Capital

Outlay Funds. However, the aggregate attendance of the schools located in the proposed zone since 1954 through 1968-69 has been 19,543. This aggregate average daily attendance multiplied by \$12.00 would have produced only \$234,516, which is at least \$310,421 less than the amount that has actually been expended on schools located in the proposed district. Serious consideration should be given this fact. These monies were earned by the attendance of all pupils in the county school system. Although there may not exist a legal obligation for the proposed district to reimburse the county system for this excess, there may be a moral obligation to restore to the county system all, or a part, of this excess.

Creating a separate school district, by necessity, creates additional administrative costs. Such costs are disproportionate from the prorata share of the larger administrative unit's costs. Listed below are some of the essential elements and estimated costs which must be considered if this proposed district is to function effectively:

<u>Function</u>	<u>Estimated Range</u>
Superintendent's Salary	\$14,000 - \$16,000
Business Assistant's Salary	10,500 - 12,500
Curriculum Coordinator	12,000 - 14,000
2 Secretaries or Clerks	9,000 - 10,500
Audit and Legal Fees	2,500 - 3,500
TOTAL	<u>\$48,000</u> <u>\$56,500</u>

In addition to the above items of expenditures, there are additional needs for travel, possible rent of facili-

ties, initial equipment, supplies, and utilities. The operation of the four school centers will require the services of a well trained business assistant in order to properly manage the fiscal affairs, supervise related responsibilities for purchasing, property control, maintenance, insurance, transportation, pupil accounting, and food service to name a few. If the district superintendent is to function properly, assistance must be provided in the area of curriculum and the instructional programs. Some of these functions are personnel recruitment and assignment, instructional equipment and materials coordination, working directly with teachers in inservice training and instructional problems, responsibility for initiating and implementing grant-in-aid programs which must include evaluations and reporting.

It is most important to examine the probable costs necessary to operate a separate school district. One approach to this analysis is to determine the actual projected cost of the existing operation on a per pupil basis, exclusive of administrative costs and initial equipment. It is assumed, of course, that the current level of educational services are to be maintained and that no less educational opportunities will be provided the pupils if a separate school district is created. Approximate data can be obtained by determining the projected per pupil costs and extending this cost by the number of pupils to be served, then add such costs for administration and new equipment.

The data provided by the county school board staff reflects the 1969-70 budget for the three schools in Clinton as:

1. \$797,781 - operating budget 1969-70
2. \$-15,372 - prorata of County Administrative Cost
3. \$782,409 (\$326 for each of 2,397 pupils enrolled)
4. \$ 342 (\$326 increased by 5% for contingency)

The above base projected for 1970-71 is as follows:

1. \$863,208 - (\$342 x 2,524 pupils)
2. \$ 52,250 - Estimated Administrative Costs (mid-point)
3. \$ 5,000 - Maintenance Costs (salary or contract)
4. \$ 2,500 - Replacement equipment
5. \$922,958 TOTAL estimated 1970-71 current operating expense

In addition to the \$922,958 for operating expense, there should be an amount budgeted to provide additional equipment for the four new teachers, the 124 additional pupils, and the essential instructional equipment in the new Northside School. This amount is estimated conservatively at \$12,000. Unless other provisions are made, the proposed district will need to acquire at least eight school buses at an estimated cost of \$52,000.

The total school budget for 1970-71 is estimated to be:

1. \$ 922,958 - Maintenance and operation
2. \$ 64,000 - New equipment, including buses
3. \$ 67,438 - Debt Service (17.34% of \$388,914)
4. \$1,054,396 TOTAL school budget for proposed district

The above analysis indicates a need to obtain resources in excess of one million dollars in order to provide each pupil a continued educational opportunity in 1970-71, at least equal to the present level, to which the pupils are entitled.

The Mississippi State Department of Education provided data, based on 1969-70 and projected data for 1970-71, which indicates the proposed district's state aid for 1970-71 would be:

\$581,537	(Computed cost of MFP based on 2,397 pupils)
<u>-56,031</u>	District's Required Effort
\$525,506	Net State MFP
<u>4,000</u>	Vocational Funds
\$529,506	State Funds based on (2,397 pupils)
39,000	(six additional units at \$6,500 each for 2,524 pupils after first two months 1970-71)
<u>\$568,506</u>	TOTAL State Funds 1970-71

The proposed district would have to provide the difference between the estimated expenditures, as cited above, and the amount to be provided by the state.

\$922,958	Maintenance and Operation
<u>- 568,506</u>	Total state funds
\$354,452	Total Local Funds
<u>- 213,882</u>	(28 mills x \$8,040,700 x 95%)
<u>\$140,570</u>	TOTAL Additional Funds Needed

The \$140,570 must be provided from local funds by increasing the tax base by 1.66 times the present \$8,040,700 or to a minimum of \$13,347,560. Assuming that the electorate authorizes the maximum tax of 28 mills.

It should be noted that there is a substantial shift in the tax impact from the state to the individual taxpayer in creating a separate municipal school district. Although there is no loss in total tax revenue to the school district, the individual taxpayer assumes the responsibility for funds which heretofore were provided by the state as such relates to the millage on homestead exempt properties.

currently enrolled in Forest Hill, West Side, Oak Forest, and Van Winkle remain in those schools. In addition to the above named school districts, there are two other school districts which are being considered in 1970-71 which will not be available for official use until 1970-71. These two schools are Jacksonville and Nashville Elementary.

The City of Jackson proposes to now support the proposed district and would like the school district to be established as a separate school district a substantial portion of the city. The proposed district would include the following school districts: Forest Hill, Oak Forest, and the new Nashville Elementary. By virtue of the people's residential locations, only 1,757 people out of a total of 2,782 in some four will be moved into the Jackson Separate School District, according to the plan, but out in that portion proposed for annexation are Van Winkle Elementary School, West Side Junior High and Elementary school, and the new Glasgow Elementary school.

The factors that should be considered by all parties

CHAPTER IV

SOME OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE EFFECT OF THE ANNEXATION BY THE CITY OF JACKSON OF A PORTION OF THE FOREST HILL ATTENDANCE ZONE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

During 1969-70 school year, in carrying out the court order, the Hinds County Board of Education created high school attendance zone four stating that the pupils currently enrolled in Forest Hill, West Side, Oak Forest, and Van Winkle remain in those schools. In addition to the above named school centers, there are two new school plants now being constructed in zone four which will not be available for official use until 1970-71. These two schools are Timberlawn and Woodville Heights Elementary.

The City of Jackson proposes to now expand its corporate limits and annex into the Jackson Separate School District a substantial portion of zone four. This annexation would include the following school centers: Forest Hill, Oak Forest, and the new Woodville Elementary. By virtue of the pupils' residential locations, only 1,957 pupils out of a total of 3,762 in zone four will be annexed into the Jackson Separate School District. Located in zone four, but not in that portion proposed for annexation are Van Winkle Elementary School, West Side Junior High and Elementary School, and the new Timberlawn Elementary School.

The factors that should be considered by all parties

concerned in this matter of the annexation of a portion of the Hinds County School District by the Jackson Separate School District may be separated into two categories; namely, fiscal and pupil population.

A. FISCAL - Information provided the survey staff indicates that the assessed valuation of the area proposed to be annexed into the Jackson Corporate limits is \$8,333,035. This represents 17.97 percent of the total valuation of Hinds County School District, which is now \$46,364,577.

B. PUPIL POPULATION -

Pupil Enrollment in Zone 4
(Forest Hill)

	<u>1969-70</u>	<u>1970-71</u> <u>Hinds County</u>	<u>1970-71</u> <u>To Jackson</u>
Forest Hill	1,576	-	-
Oak Forest	798	-	-
Sub-total	-	536 ⁽¹⁾	1,838
Van Winkle	444	380	64
West Side	918	863	55
TOTAL	<u>3,736</u>	<u>1,779</u>	<u>1,957</u> *

* Of the 1,957 pupils, approximately 150 are Negroes and 1,807 white.

(1) 513 pupils currently enrolled in Forest Hill Junior Senior High School reside outside the area proposed to be annexed.

23 pupils residing in Zone 5 of the county school system would be excluded from the annexed school centers.

The 1,957 pupils represent 15.01 percent of the existing 13,036 pupils enrolled in the Hinds County School District.

From these two basic statements, the following observations and facts should be considered:

1. Is it in the best interest of the pupils and their total educational experiences that this annexation take place?
2. From data supplied by the staff of the county school board, there will remain, as stated above, in the Forest Hill attendance zone approximately 268 Negro and 245 white high school students that will not have a high school facility available in the reduced zone four to which immediate assignment could be made. The possible alternate attendance areas for reassignment are the third, fifth, or seventh zones. The assignment to any one of these zones will require additional transportation. Another solution would be to provide suitable facilities in the fourth attendance zone, or to enter into an agreement with the Jackson Separate School District to admit them on a tuition basis. However, any of these alternatives will increase the expenditure per pupil in order to continue public education for these pupils.
3. In addition to the Jackson Separate School District assuming its proportionate share of the responsibility for the retirement of the existing

indebtedness of the Hinds County School District, an evaluation should be made of the amount of the Mississippi Education Finance Commission Capital Outlay Funds expended on the centers to be annexed, compared to the actual funds earned by pupil attendance in such centers since 1954. As already cited in that portion of this report dealing with the proposed Clinton Municipal Separate School District, a similar condition exists in the area proposed to be annexed. While there may not exist a legal obligation for Jackson to reimburse Hinds County for this difference, if any, there is perhaps a moral obligation for the City of Jackson to reimburse the county school system for the excess expenditure over earnings. The rationale for this observation stems from the fact that if the Hinds County Board of Education had not expended these excess funds in these school centers, now proposed to be removed from the county, the school board could have utilized these funds in improving other county schools for which this board has a continuing responsibility.

4. The present assessed valuation to support each pupil now enrolled in the Hinds County School System is \$3,556.00. The effect of removing \$8,333,035 of taxable property from the Hinds County School System and removing an enrollment of 1,957 pupils from the

system will reduce the tax base to support each remaining pupil to \$3,432.00, showing a reduction of taxable wealth of \$123.00 per pupil.

5. The local tax revenue to be lost by the Hinds County School System would be \$221,659, or 17.97 percent of the total local taxes anticipated for the system.

Summary of Findings:

12,024 Hinds County total enrollment
 - 2,528 to proposed Madison District
 = 9,496 to Jackson by association
 9,496 to remain in Hinds County School System

If the 9,496 remaining in the county school system were to be 2,416 negro and 7,080 white pupils, on a pupil population of 74.93 percent negro and 25.07 percent white.

FISCAL DATA:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Total Valuation</u>
Hinds County	\$44,364,373
Zone Five	- 2,040,766
Jackson Association	= 2,331,035
Hinds County Reduced	<u>\$22,990,542</u>

The anticipated revenue that the Hinds County School System may anticipate after the removal of the two geographical areas would be:

CHAPTER V

HINDS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM WITH THE FIFTH ATTENDANCE ZONE BECOMING A SEPARATE DISTRICT AND A PORTION OF FOREST HILL ZONE ANNEXED TO THE CITY OF JACKSON

This study would not be complete without considering the effects of both proposals on the Hinds County School System.

PUPIL PERSONNEL:

13,036	Hinds County total enrollment
- 2,524	to proposed Clinton District
- 1,957	to Jackson by annexation
<u>8,555</u>	to remain in Hinds County School System

Of the 8,555 remaining in the county school system there would be 6,410 Negro and 2,145 white pupils, or a pupil population of 74.93 percent Negro and 25.07 percent white.

FISCAL DATA:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Total Valuation</u>
Hinds County	\$46,364,577
Zone Five	- 8,040,700
Jackson Annexation	- 8,333,035
Hinds County Reduced	<u>\$29,990,842</u>

The anticipated revenue that the Hinds County School System may anticipate after the removal of the two geographical areas would be:

\$29,990,842	Total Valuation
<u>X .028</u>	Maximum Millage
\$839,743.58	Maximum Collections
<u>X .95</u>	Average Collection Rate
<u>\$797,756.40</u>	Anticipated Tax Collections

The anticipated receipt of \$797,756 for the 8,555 pupils would provide \$93.25 in local taxes for each pupil. The present assessed valuation of the Hinds County School System provides \$1,233,298 for the 13,036 pupils, or \$94.61 per pupil. Therefore, if both proposals become a reality, the reduction of the tax base and loss of pupils have almost an identical relationship. There would be only \$1.36 less local taxes received per pupil in the reduced Hinds County School System.

The survey staff expresses its appreciation to the board, superintendent, and staff of the Hinds County School District for the basic pupil and fiscal data included in this report.